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By Marilyn and Joe Bawol



ON THE COVER

LAURA LOUKAIDES
Laura Loukaides Cakes
Stevenage, United Kingdom

"Orchid the Owl is inspired by a tattoo I found online," said Loukaides. "The vibrant colors, especially the pinks and the blues really caught my eye. I made each feather individually and placed them on the cake one by one. I then airbrushed definition on the tip of each feather and completed the cake by adding small amounts of gold luster around the face."

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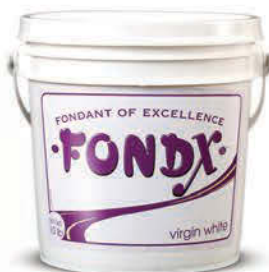


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Gianfranco Carbonaro considers Buddy Valastro his “TV cake mentor” and feels they share similar artistic inspirations.

[Facebook.com/gianfranco.carbonaro.3](#)



I love this floral dessert recipe board by Jana Coelho with inspirations from around the world.

[Pinterest.com/janacoelho/flowers-dessert/](#)



Ron Ben-Israel recently moved his studio from SoHo to the Garment District and I'm anxiously waiting for news on when he's going to host a studio-warming!

[Twitter.com/rbicakes](#)

Spring FORWARD

Spring is in the air regardless of where you are reading this! I'm loving Chef Nicholas Lodge's article about lavender and rose. I have to admit that these are two of my favorite scents and flavors. Many of us don't think of these lovely florals as taste sensations but they are amazing when used in the right setting or combination. For example, I make a wonderful salad dressing with lavender and honey, and our editor



Get Grace's Lavender Vinaigrette recipe via the digital edition.

Susan Schultz makes a delicious lavender lemonade (and some fantastic cocktails) with her own lavender simple syrup. We'd love to hear from you with some of your favorite floral recipes—the perfect way to welcome spring!

While I'm always in awe of the creations our talented contributors share with us, there's something about sculpted cakes that just wows me. I'm convinced that talent for sugar artistry has to be genetic. What about Anthony Peña who shares how to create a Peacock topper on page 52—he realized his passion when he was only 16—and since then has consistently worked to advance his skills. And speaking of Anthony, let's hear it for the boys! I've been so impressed with many of the international cake collaborations taking place recently, it's a thrill to see such great work from artists I might never have heard of otherwise. So I'm pleased that we've included some of the designs from the recent RevHeads collaboration celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Ford Mustang featuring an all-male crew of international sugar artists. Look for some of their designs in our showcase as well as online.

Grace McNamara

Grace McNamara, Publisher



See some of the RevHeads designs online via ACD+ at [AmericanCakeDecorating.com](#)

THE *inspirations* THAT DRIVE ACD READERS TO CREATE.

RIANY CLEMENT

Owner, Bellaria Cakes Design
Nootdorp, The Netherlands

Riany Clement grew up in Indonesia and has always loved baking and cooking. Now living in The Netherlands with her husband and three children, she attended her first cake workshop in 2011 and was hooked. What started out as a hobby has flourished, and she now manages a cake business alongside her part-time job.



Weblinks

BellariaCakesDesign.nl
Facebook.com/BellariaCakesDesign

"I get inspiration from everything for my cakes: magazines, TV, but also everyday life. A few years ago I discovered that math can be more interesting than I initially thought. I absolutely love geometric patterns and designs and the optical illusions you create with them. The results are intricate, yet so clean. To be able to convert one's wishes into a cake is one of the most gratifying feelings I get. I love doing what I do right now and I hope I will be doing this for years to come."



"I really admire Escher, a famous Dutch artist known for his complicated drawings. I like creating designs using geometric shapes and enjoyed the challenge of including the Escher-like illusion of the pattern warping and expanding. Cakes like these take a lot of time to put together, but I had fun making this design especially for *American Cake Decorating*!"



See more of this
Escher-inspired cake
via the digital edition.



"This handbag cake and gumpaste shoe was a centerpiece I did for a birthday party. I used the alligator impression mat by Marvelous Molds to create the pattern design. The high heel shoe was a bit challenging for me because this was the first time I sculpted a shoe. But it got easier once I got the hang of it!"

SANDRA L. BRUMFIELD

Owner, Sweet Nouveau, Matteson, IL

Before the economic downturn after 2008, Sandra L. Brumfield ran a successful nail salon, where guests were also treated to her passion for baked goods as she tried out various recipes and techniques. When she had to shut her salon, she continued baking but soon realized that as a self-taught baker, she could only go so far. She enrolled in the French Pastry School's L'Art de la Pâtisserie program, and shortly after graduation landed a position as a baker in Nordstroms' Café, with the goal of opening her own



business again. In September 2012 she launched Sweet Nouveau and soon gained local recognition for her designs. She created display cakes for the 2014 and 2015 For the Love of Chocolate fundraising galas for the French Pastry School, thrilled to give back to her most recent alma mater.

Weblinks

MySweetNouveau.com
Facebook.com/SweetNouveau
Instagram.com/SweetNouveau

"With a bachelors degree in Fashion Merchandising, fashion definitely inspires my work. I love fashion and am constantly looking for patterns and colors that I could use as inspiration when designing my cakes."

THE *Shape* OF THINGS

Using cake and sugar as their canvas, talented artists fool the eye with designs that encourage creativity.

ROBIN APTED

Unusual Cakes For You | Austins Ferry, Australia

For her version of the always popular handbag cake, Apted layered, torted and caved three 8" square mud cakes. The fondant was embossed with an alligator skin impression mat and then finished off with hand cut and shaped details, including the zipper.



APRIL JULIAN

Queen City Bakeshop | Toronto, Canada

"This cake was inspired by a story my client told me about how he affectionately began calling his wife "squirrel" because she would always put his things away before he had finished using them," said Julian. "I thought, what better way to thank a beloved squirrel than with a giant acorn?" To give this carved cake added depth and realism, she textured the fondant with a Dresden tool to create irregular ridges, then further highlighted the surface by airbrushing anywhere shadows would naturally form. The acorn scales were cut using a simple heart-shaped cookie cutter, each of which were then stretched and slightly frilled at the edges to make each unique.

The Phalaenopsis orchid cake was originally created as a surprise for Julian's mother, an avid gardener. The cake flower pot is hand painted to give it a distressed appearance, while the gumpaste orchids are individually freehand cut and hand painted. "I opted to not use a flower cutter because I believe gumpaste flowers look more real when they are imperfect and irregular, as they are in nature."

RACHAEL MORRIS

Three Tiers for Cake | Denver, NC

"This is my second Harry Potter cake. My oldest son is obsessed with the books and movies," said Morris. "I actually got into cake decorating because I wanted to make him a Harry Potter cake. I first tried over a year ago and it was an epic fail! I was terrified to try working with fondant again but I wanted to redeem myself."

For her second attempt Morris created a stack of books that could be found on any student's desk at Hogwarts, along some pieces that reference other famous items from the series—Tom Riddle's Diary, a Basilisk fang, a Flying Golden Snitch and a chocolate frog jumping from its box.

She even included the belt for holding the Monster Book of Monsters closed.

Photography: Jennifer Yurush



See details and other photos from this cake via the digital edition.





See details and other photos from this cake via the digital edition.

ANDRES ENCISO

Awesome Edible Art | Miami, FL

For the RevHeads collaboration, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Ford Mustang, Enciso not only created a replica of the famous car, but also the company logo, the brand logo, his version of the running horse, as well a portrait of Henry Ford, a clock to represent the passage of time and some flames. The addition of LED lighting makes the whole ensemble shimmer and glow.



SERDER YENER

Yeners Way | Gold Coast, Australia

For his contribution to the RevHeads collaboration, Serder Yener, the father in a father-and-son business, decided to make a sculpture of a wild horse resembling the famous Mustang logo but not a copy of it. "I love making animal sculptures and I wanted to try to take a snapshot of a frozen moment in time while a Mustang horse is running wild and free at high speed. I felt this piece captures the essence of what Ford Mustang means to me," explained Serder. He decided to carve his sculpture out of pastry margarine mixed with 20% cocoa powder as he was originally going to leave it unpainted, but eventually decided to add the edible silver coating.



See details from these designs via the digital edition.



SERKAN YENER

Yeners Way | Gold Coast, Australia

A double-sided mirror splits half of a 1965 Ford Mustang Shelby GT350 cake on one side and half a 2016 Ford Mustang Shelby GT350 cake on the other side, giving the illusion that they are both whole cars. "When I first thought about the collaboration I thought I'd do a car cake, but then thought, which model should I do?" explained Serkan. "So I came up with the idea of the oldest and the newest models together into one somehow."

"This was the first time I ever had to do 'half' a car cake and it was definitely unusual and came with a set of different challenges that I did not think of at first. Normally shaping a 3D car cake, one is able to visualize the entire cake and make the correct proportions, but trying to make sure that half the car was really half the car so that it wouldn't be too wide or narrow was tricky. Another challenge was getting the inside part of each car to be completely flat to sit right up against the mirror. In the end, I was very happy with the outcome and it was fun to make a car cake, but a bit different than how it's normally done!"

GARY PUTTICK

Putty Cakes | Crawley, United Kingdom

Known as “The Bagman” for all his handbag cakes, Puttick did his own take on the RevHeads collaboration and created a Ford Mustang handbag, in a shape that closely resembles a bowling ball bag.



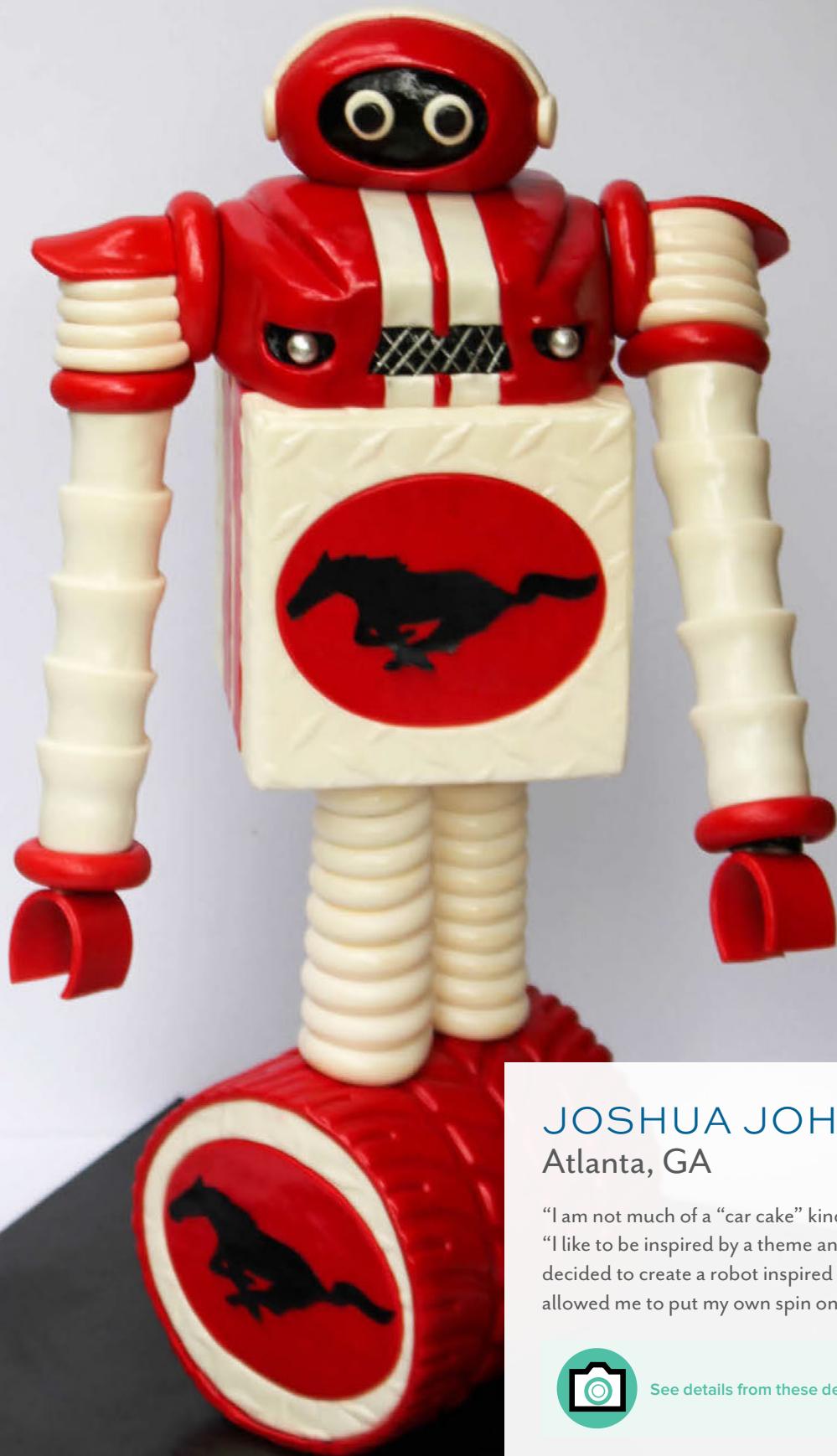
See the details on this cake
via the digital edition.

MICHAEL ALMEIDA

Bolos do Mike
Lisbon, Portugal

The white chocolate horse head with its pulled isomalt mane dominates this RevHeads entry, while ultra-wide performance tires provide a backdrop for a souped-up Mustang.

Portugal has been growing in cake artistry day by day and it's an honor to represent my country.



JOSHUA JOHN RUSSELL

Atlanta, GA

"I am not much of a 'car cake' kind of designer," said Russell. "I like to be inspired by a theme and then run with it, so I decided to create a robot inspired by the Mustang, which allowed me to put my own spin on this project."



See details from these designs via the digital edition.



See details from these designs via the digital edition.



JOLY DIAZ

Viva La Cake | Woodstock, GA

“It’s a Small World” was a collaboration organized by Yanira Anglada of Cake Therapy to celebrate Universal Children’s Day, an event instituted by the United Nations to promote the welfare of the children of the world. More than 40 cake artists participated, and each developed a mini collection of cupcake designs based on a specific city. Diaz, with her love of all thing “kawaii” (Japanese for cute) was thrilled to work on Tokyo, creating two schoolgirls, one in uniform and one dressed for a tea ceremony, set against a backdrop of cherry blossoms.





See details from these designs via the digital edition.

NADIA FLECHA GUAZO

ChocoLate
Grimbergen, Belgium

For Honolulu, another city in the “It’s a Small World” collaboration, Guazo designed a hulu girl, surrounded by a variety of exotic blossoms and tiki masks.



SHAWNA MCGREEVY

McGreevy Cakes
Akron, NY

A dreamy Spanish dancer twirls amid ruffled carnations in McGreevy’s design for Madrid, her entry in the “It’s a Small World” collaboration.



ZOE CLARK

The Cake Parlour
Wimbledon, United Kingdom

Taking her inspiration from the annual Carnival of Venice, Clark created a sweet masked couple, set against a mini fleet of gondolas for her “It’s a Small World’ contribution.



See details and other photos from this cake via the digital edition.

JAMIE MOON

Love Blossoms Cakery
Weatherford, TX

“I wanted to do a difficult 3D cake. Who knows when I would ever get an order for one, so I decided to create one just for myself,” explained Moon. She spotted the “Walktopus” lamp by artist Scott Musgrove and knew she had her inspiration. After requesting permission from the artist to attempt a version in cake, Moon began working on the framework that would allow the finished design to balance on one tentacle. “To make the tentacles I extruded a round rope, then rolled those in balls and used the mini tool to indent them,” she said. “I found that by using pressure rotating the tool, it makes the resulting “sucker” almost see through and far more realistic.”





Curran shares how to make the relish courtesy of Icing Images.



MICHELLE "CHEF MITCHIE" CURRAN

Mitchies Munchies | Las Vegas, NV

"A success in fooling the eye, as the birthday girl was so excited to bite into her "cherry pie" but completely surprised when she realized the cherries were candy," said Curran. Each of the cherries was hand-rolled and then painted with a mixture of corn syrup and grenadine for that "luscious filling look," she explained. "The lattice proved to be the most difficult, I recommend assembling it separately, freezing, then placing atop your pie cake."

After her first-ever trip to Chicago, Curran regretted she didn't try a Chicago dog, so instead decided to recreate it. "The bun and hot dog are cake. The "fixins" are made of fondant, gum paste, and modeling chocolate. The mustard is thinned buttercream tinted neon yellow, while the relish is made using Icing Images' DECOgel. It sets up like a gummy candy and was perfect for this project!"



KEVIN M. CASE

Photography: Bruce Donnelly, DKR Films

Kevin M. Case is currently the executive chef at The Captain's House Inn, Chatham, MA, a four-diamond property on Cape Cod. Prior to the Captain's House, Kevin worked in the pastry department of the Wequassett Inn, also on Cape Cod. He also has a private cake design business, Kevinly Cakes. Over the years he has found that he uses his spatulas in place of spoons, knives, bench scrapers and more.

What's the one spatula you reach for more than any other?

I use my offset spatula for so much: picking out a speck in the frosting, marbling a brownie or cake batter or remove drop flowers off the nail. I cut slivers of cakes or pastries or use it split a scone and slather on homemade strawberry preserves.

When an order calls for chocolate curls, I will usually ice down a sheet pan or my table and pour tempered melted chocolate on it and then go about creating different sizes of curls using the back of the offset spatula to get different depths in the curls. It is nice because the spatula becomes one with the chocolate and you can pull away creating different finishes in the ends of the curl or create cut outs in the poured chocolate thus, creating appliques.

I use the tip to pick up the perfect amount of color paste to tint a frosting and the knife-edge tip to carefully paint color into batters and frostings. When the oven timer rings,



Photography: Bruce Donnelly, DKR Films

it's perfect for lifting off cookies, cheese crisps or tuille from your Silpat without a blemish to the work or the pad!

Have you tried different types or brands of spatulas over the years?

Some folks are always looking for the latest and greatest gadget or some 'trophy' implement. My most trusted spatula has been with me some 20 years, despite a nick or two and a loose rivet. As graceful as I like to think I am, truth is, I've got some big hands. This old offset lets me move in and finesse small details and smooth jobs quickly and beautifully. **ACD**

Weblink | Kevinmcase@mac.com



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THE Madeleine QUESTIONNAIRE

Our take on the Proust Questionnaire, in deference to his masterpiece *Remembrance of Things Past*, where a madeleine dipped tea evokes waves of sensory memories.



Chef Mark Seaman is a Technical Advisor at Barry Callebaut North America at the Chocolate Academy in Chicago, IL. He interacts with pastry chefs, chocolatiers and bakers from all over the world to develop innovative chocolate creations.

Prior to joining Barry Callebaut, Chef Seaman was an instructor at the renowned French Pastry School in Chicago, IL and he recently contributed a cake design to the annual For the Love of Chocolate fundraiser for the school. Chef Seaman continues to influence cake decorators, serving as a judge in wedding cake competitions around the United States. In addition, he is an adjudicator for sugar artist certification by the International Cake Exploration Société (ICES).

What is your first food memory?

Walking down the street to my grandfather's house and eating doughnuts with him from Ideal Bakery, the bakery he owned. Also drinking milk from my blue milk mug in the mornings when he got home from baking bread.

Who would you most like to share a kitchen with?

Alton Brown. I could listen to his quirky, amusing, science-based explanations to the world of food all day.

What famous person would you most like to have created a dessert for—can be real or fictional, any time period?

Marie Antoinette. She was so over the top in her indulgences, that I would love to have made a multi-tiered cake (taller than her hair!) teeming with sugar flowers and gilded décor!

Where did you discover a taste or flavor combination that completely surprised you?

Ice kachang in Kuala Lumpur. It's shaved ice served with sweetened red beans and sweetened corn, sugar palm fruit, grass jelly and condensed milk!

Who's been the biggest influence on your career?

Nicholas Lodge. Nick has been teacher, mentor, friend, advocate, and role model for all of the many years that I have known him. He is one of the kindest and most humble professionals anyone can ever encounter.

What's your dessert of choice? Or your favorite meal of choice?

Pie. After I stopped getting birthday cakes from my grandfather's bakery, I started asking for birthday pie. My favorite is blackberry peach.

Where is your culinary dream destination?

Paris. Some of my friends say that I must have been French in a former life because I simply cannot get enough of this food hotspot.



Get Chef Seaman's recipes for a chocolate almond cake with fudge filling and white chocolate buttercream via ACD+ at AmericanCakeDecorating.com



For the 2014 Asia Pastry Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Chef Seaman created two versions of a six-tiered white-fondant covered wedding cake. Each featured the same realistic gumpaste tiger lilies and moth orchids, embossed 50/50 base borders, crimping and piped bead borders. One version featured white-on-white stenciling, while the other included design elements based on Radiant Orchid, the 2014 Pantone color of the year.

What has been your best professional experience to date?

My "best" experience changes over time, but it's always the most recent "first". Recently it was the opportunity to teach a wedding cake class at the Asia Pastry Forum in Malaysia where I had a classroom of enthusiastic students from all over Asia.

What's your favorite recipe you've developed?

My signature banana cake layered with white chocolate whipped ganache.

Do you have a favorite cookbook? If so, what won you over?

Flavor First by Cheryl Forgberg. As a person who thrives on meals that don't require three days to prepare but still please your taste buds with well-developed flavors, Cheryl's ideas are a godsend after a busy day in the chocolate lab.

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Designing DREAMS

BY SUSAN SCHULTZ

While a birthday cake she created for Ralph Lauren may have jump-started her cake career, **Elisa Strauss** had determined her career path well before then.



With a background in studio arts, fiber arts, color theory and drawing, as a college junior Elisa Strauss landed an ideal internship for someone with her skills—the prints department at Ralph Lauren. Even better, it led to a full-time job at the company after her graduation. However, while working at Ralph Lauren she was also attending pastry school on the weekends and, even without the cake-intensive programs many schools offer today, she soon realized she wanted to do cake.

While still attending pastry school, she left Ralph Lauren for a position at Frederic Fekkai designing handbags and hair accessories, but after one year there, returned to a part-time

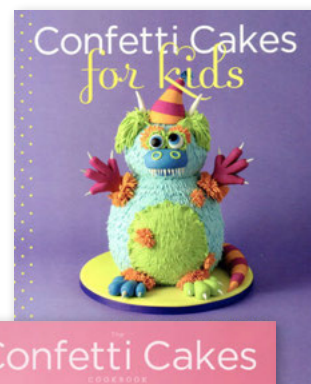
position at Ralph Lauren that would allow her to attend pastry school in the afternoons—helping her reach her ultimate goal that much faster.

“Going back to Ralph Lauren was like coming home again,” explained Strauss. “Everyone knew me and knew that I made cakes ‘on the side’ so it wasn’t a surprise when the Senior Vice President of Womens’ Design asked me to make a special cake for Ralph Lauren’s 60th birthday.”

Strauss spent hours in the photo department, reviewing and selecting photos of Lauren’s beloved Bugatti, the inspiration for her design. “We surprised Ralph with a get-together on our floor—it was our gift from the Womens’ Department.” The fashion press got a hold of the story and Strauss was now receiving offers from other industry notables. “Unfortunately, I didn’t realize at the time how important it is to get a photo of the cake! I’m sure there’s some small snapshot somewhere of me with Ralph and the cake, but I don’t have it,” she added.

Moving Forward

The encouragement she received in the wake of Lauren’s Bugatti cake allowed her to move her timeline up a bit more. She began freelancing in fashion industry, still doing cakes on the sideline, but working on her business plan. While still in pastry school she already had her brother developing a website for her. In February 2002, everything was in place and she launched Confetti Cakes.





Shoe and handbag designs are one of Strauss' specialties and her recently launched Craftsy class "High-Fashion Heels" teaches how to design shoes—wedges, stilettos, kitten heels and more—encouraging them to create their own unique fashion statement. Photography: Allison Whitney Pecca

Word spread fast, as Strauss was one of the 'early adopters' in making sculpted and trompe l'oeil cakes—a legacy courtesy of that Bugatti. Animals, sport themes, toys, food and, of course, fashion-inspired designs became her calling card, with her creations appearing on the *Today* show, *Sex and the City*, *The View* and *Martha*. She also appeared several times on the Food Network, including the "Extreme Cake Challenge" where she won the grand prize. Her elegant wedding cakes garnered equal acclaim and her work could be found in *InStyle*, *Martha Stewart Weddings*, *Marie Claire*, *Seventeen*, *Elle*, *Vogue*, *Modern Bride*, *New York* magazine, *BRIDES*, *Elegant Bride*, and *The Knot*.

It was a very sweet and successful whirlwind. However, after almost ten years Strauss recognized it was time for a change. "I had started a family, my various employees were ready to start new chapters in their own lives and I was excited to focus my business on more educational aspects like product development and online videos," she explains. During





This alligator handbag had been in Strauss' repertoire for a while, but when it came time to teach it for Craftsby, she realized she needed to develop an easier way to create the necessary texture. The result was the first in a line of impression mats she designed in conjunction with Marvelous Molds. | Photo credit: Craftsby.com

this time she had designed and created literally hundreds of cakes, written two books and participated in countless television segments as well as six competitions for the Food Network. She closed her commercial space, took a smaller studio space and began the next phase of her career.

New Directions

"Product development is really where I feel most comfortable," explained Strauss. "It is a combination of my experience with working in cakes for so long and my insane attention to detail. Day in and day out I make decisions with my life that I am unsure about but when dealing with

product design it is very easy for me to see clearly in black and white—it either looks good or not, and it either works for the consumer or it doesn't."

Given her background in fashion and the success of her fashion-inspired cakes, particularly all the variations of handbags and shoes she did at Confetti Cakes, it should come as no surprise that many of the products she's developed have a fashion flair to them.

"When I was developing my first video for Craftsby, a tutorial for an alligator-skin handbag, it was a process I'd done before by hand. But it would take a very long time and might be difficult for others to replicate. I ended up partnering

with Marvelous Molds to create an impression mat. I hadn't used many silicone products before, but the company was wonderful to work with—we share a similar commitment to detail and craftsmanship.”

Since then Strauss has worked with Marvelous Molds on a line of mats, as well as an entire line of molds for shoe details—buckles, spikes, bows, chains, and more. “When designing for shoe detail molds, I kept in mind the scale and the type of details that could be used for other cake and sugar creations, such as handbags, dolls, jewelry boxes, toys and, of course, all types of fashion cakes,” she explained.

Her relationship with Craftsby has been eye-opening. “Being a teacher has allowed me to reach people in various parts of the world that I would never have been able to before,” said Strauss. “Although technology is wonderful, it's also introduced us to this social media marathon. As a creative person I want to be in my studio creating things with my hands but so much of what I do now is on my computer! On the other hand, because I now work alone for most of my projects—one person bursting with ideas—technology provides a platform and access to the wider world outside my studio.”

As Strauss reviewed her varied and successful career for this interview, the mood seemed pleased, but not fully satisfied. “In the future I hope to have my business run a little smoother—I want to look at my website and be happy, and know that my students and users of my products are happy. I want to be able to enjoy life without constantly worrying about work but, being the perfectionist I am, I don't have high hopes for that last part!” **ACD**

Weblinks | ConfettiCakes.com
| [YouTube.com/user/ConfettiCakes](https://www.youtube.com/user/ConfettiCakes)
| MarvelousMolds.com/Collaborators/Elisa

Strauss is offering ACD readers
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TOP: Even with her current focus on product development, Strauss continues to design specialty cakes such as this matryoshka doll ornament she finished for the recent holiday season.

BOTTOM: The dog cake also used some of her impression mats, drastically cutting down on the time required to create the fur texture. | Photo credit: Craftsby.com

Moving Forward BY STEPPING BACK

BY RACHAEL TEUFEL

As a small business owner, the decisions you make for your business directly affect your personal life as well. Trying to balance both becomes challenging. **Rachael Teufel** of Intricate Icings shares her journey from part-time cake artist to more-than-full-time business owner, as well as the factors that lead to her decision to scale.

When I started my journey as a cake artist, I was confident that this path would lead to a career that was enjoyable, fulfilling and, of course, profitable. We all have an idea in our minds of what a truly successful business is, a definition that means something different for everyone. But as our lives change, how we measure success tends to change as well.

I have struggled with maintaining a healthy work/life balance since the moment I started my company in 2006. When I first began, I worked another job to pay bills while I established my reputation and built a solid client base. It meant long days of working as a physical therapist, followed by even longer nights creating cakes, a situation I'm sure many readers have also experienced. After a little over a year, I was able to leave my job as a physical therapist to focus solely on cake and raising my new baby boy. (Yes, that's right—new baby, new business!)

My company grew quickly and I soon realized I needed help keeping up with orders, so I opened a studio and hired employees. Of course, this allowed me to make more cakes, but it also meant there was more overhead to cover. For two years, the three of us produced and delivered an average of 10 cakes per weekend. I decided to hire more employees, thinking the extra hands would help give me the freedom to have a family and a business. But really it just meant I had to take on more orders to cover their wages and spend more time managing a larger staff. I spent 60-80 hours at the studio, missed out on quality family time, and was stressed beyond belief. I realized something had to change, but didn't know where to begin. And being so busy, I didn't have the extra time to figure it out until I was forced to change due to the effects on my health.

Two years ago I decided to take back control of my life and it's been a work in progress ever since. I was scared to make changes to an established business for fear of losing clients, but knew I couldn't maintain the pace that I was keeping for much longer. I evaluated where my most substantial profit was coming from and restructured my business to focus almost solely on wedding cakes. I took steps to solidify my reputation in the wedding community, building stronger referral sources. I chose to take on fewer, but more elaborate, cakes in order to maintain my income while scaling back my staff. Not only did this help financially, but I was far happier by finding more time to focus on the areas of my business that I loved—creativity and client relations—as well as spending more time with family.

Eventually I realized that expanding my business into a larger production over the last eight years was contrary to my original vision. Producing hundreds of cakes each year made it difficult to give each cake the attention to detail that it deserved. Furthermore, it left me personally managing a business instead of being the artist that I set out to be or spending time with the family that I love. This new direction allows me to personally create each cake, from concept to completion.

“PRODUCING HUNDREDS OF CAKES EACH YEAR MADE IT DIFFICULT TO GIVE EACH CAKE THE ATTENTION TO DETAIL THAT IT DESERVED.”

Running your own business is difficult, but extremely rewarding. It requires you to sacrifice a lot of things in life to be successful but I realized also how important it is to be comfortable with those sacrifices. If you're not, it's ultimately better for you and your family to adjust your business to suit your needs. Now when making decisions about my business, I'm trying to consistently apply the standard that my business should be about making my life better—not that my life should be devoted to improving my business. **ACD**

Rachael is offering **50% off** her three **Craftsy** courses to American Cake Decorating readers.

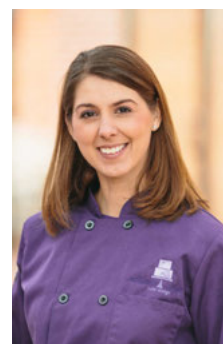
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Rachael Teufel has always had artistic interests, although her original career was in physical therapy. She was thrilled to discover a creative outlet decorating cakes and in 2006, started her own company, Intricate Icings Cake Design. Rachael's work has been featured on episodes of Food Network Challenge as well as in the pages of magazines such as *Brides*, *Martha Stewart Weddings* and *The Knot*. Rachael has been awarded several top honors including being named one of *Martha Stewart Weddings*' top pastry pros in the country and *Brides* "Top 100 Bakeries" & "50 Most Beautiful Wedding Cakes." Rachael currently teaches three classes for Craftsy and offers individual classes.



Weblinks

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DO YOU KNOW *Hue*?

BY SONYA HONG



“Nail salons and paint stores—
find me at either one of these
places, and chances are, I will be
in paralysis over choosing just
the right color,” said **Sonya Hong**.
“There are so many shades and
undertones to any given color,
each with distinct personalities.
Color makes our world come alive.”

This concept is especially true when it comes to color choice in cakes. The colors in any particular cake design can transform a cake from mediocre to WOW. It can evoke certain emotions, make people do a double-take, and make people want to buy a cake.

The right color combination can modernize a cake design and give it a trendy twist. For example, a decade ago, pink and brown were all the rage, this trend was followed by light blue and brown, light purple and brown and eventually red and brown. Brown, once considered as stodgy and boring, was perceived as hip and fresh. Brown became the new black. Black and white, often in damask pattern, became a trend. Today, mirrors and metallics are showing up everywhere in fashion and textiles, and in turn, also on cakes.

One of the hardest things to do as a cake designer is to come up with fresh color schemes. Oftentimes, the client dictates color choice; however, if a cake maker can present clients with designs that already incorporate the “it” colors of the moment, or if you can create your own unique color combinations, your cakes will catch the eye of more potential customers.

So how does one go about choosing a color scheme for cakes? Some look to the Pantone Institute, which announces its “color of the year” for the following year each December. Last year, Pantone’s choice was Radiant Orchid; this year, it is Marsala, a rich, earthy wine color. These “colors of the year” have some influence in our industry, but I like to see what’s currently popular in retail. I stroll the shops, looking at both clothing and stationery and home decor, and try to get a sense of what’s hot.

Liz Shim, owner of Eat Cake Be Merry, Edgewater, NJ, takes inspiration from nature, graphic design, stationery and wallpaper. “I like playing with various shades of one color on a cake...using different tones of one color on a cake

LEFT AND BOTTOM RIGHT: In several of her recently released Craftsby tutorials, such as “Fresh Arrangements: Buttercream and Beyond,” Sonya Hong demonstrates how to use the color wheel to achieve different shades of wonderfully complementary colors. | Photos courtesy of Craftsby

TOP RIGHT: Liz Shim, of Eat Cake Be Merry, recommends starting with pre-mixed colored fondant to save time and get an intense saturation, but then mixing in other colors for complexity. “That way, the cake looks more customized and less commercialized,” she explains.





Kate Sullivan recommends coloring a small amount of fondant at a time, and then combining all batches together to make a larger one. That way, if any batch starts going awry, it is easier to adjust.

allows the design to blend well and appeal to the eye.” This ombré approach to color has been particularly popular over the past several years. Another cake artist, Kate Sullivan, owner of Cake Power, New York City, NY, usually searches for something specific to be her inspiration—a piece of artwork, book illustration or fabric. She often also just does an Internet search on color palettes as a starting point; for example, “gold weddings”, just to see what catches her eye.

Once you have chosen your color scheme, achieving the exact shade in buttercream or fondant can be tricky. Studying the color wheel is an excellent starting point to understanding how to mix colors. For example, to make a life-like green, you would add yellow to green, and then a drop of red to tone down the green. Red is a complement to green on the color wheel so adding it will soften any green color. But bear in mind that color is very subjective. What is a stunning color combination to one person might be downright unappealing to another. And, one person’s idea of a certain color can differ wildly from another’s. I will never forget the time a customer arrived to pick up her cake only to exclaim, “That’s not raspberry pink!” Since then, if a client asks for a specific color cake, I always ask for a swatch to avoid confusion.

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Color can make such a huge impact on a cake design, so it's worth taking the time to learn more about color. Once you've honed the art of mixing colors and choosing eye-catching color schemes, you will have a powerful tool to add to your arsenal of cake decorating techniques. **ACD**



Sonya's classes also include tips for choosing color schemes as well as a color-mixing chart which can serve as a guide. These tools are a solid start for learning to work with color, but like learning any skill, there's a lot of trial and error involved. Photos courtesy of Craftsby



After operating a successful bakery in San Francisco called Butterfly Cakes for many years, **Sonya Hong** is now teaching and blogging about the cakes in the New York area. She is also an on-line instructor at Craftsby. See the weblinks where she has offered a special discount for *American Cake Decorating* readers.

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Exploring EGG YOLKS

BY JUNITA BOGNANNI

The egg is a wonder of nature. So outwardly simple, the egg packs a powerful punch once you crack open its perfect shell. Separating the yolk from the white multiplies the egg's potential. So, let's explore the singular effect an egg yolk has on a recipe. What properties does it have and how does it affect the other ingredients at play?



To examine the egg yolk, let's focus on two workhorses of the pastry kitchen: custards and curds. Extremely versatile, you'll find them making cameo appearances in many desserts: pastry cream and citrus curd as fillings for cakes, tarts and pies. Or you might spot custard in the form of panna cotta or crème brûlée, working its magic as a stand-alone dessert. Endlessly variable, a simple base can easily be altered with aromatics and spices, for as many flavor combinations as your heart desires. Every last one relies on egg yolks for its success. Understanding how custards and curds work will give you a better understanding of the egg itself.

Custards

Custard is simply a liquid thickened by egg yolks. There are three types, but we need only concern ourselves with the first two—simple and starch-thickened (the third type, thickened by gelatin, does not contain eggs). Egg yolks are responsible for custard done right—smooth, luscious texture like silk on the tongue—and for custard done terribly wrong—watery, lumpy, and worst of all, curdled. The ingredients are the same; it's the process that's critical.

A good custard-maker is like a snake charmer, but instead of slithering reptiles, your job is to tame wiggly proteins. This is where egg yolks play a starring role. In order to transform a liquid base (comprised most simply of milk, sugar and eggs) into a solid custard, you must activate the thousands of protein molecules present in egg yolks. In their natural state, these proteins fold onto themselves, forming a ball shape. They unwind, or “denature,” in the presence of heat, forming long, crisscrossed shapes. At this point it's helpful to imagine custard not as liquid or solid, but as a suspension of liquid. Unfurled, this mass of proteins forms a delicate grid, the molecules bonded not to themselves, but to liquid and other proteins surrounding the liquid.

The difference between ethereally light custard and an infernally dense one is a matter of degrees. To ensure a gossamer texture, it's important to apply gentle heat so that the proteins in the egg yolks unwind gradually. Ideally the custard will bake until just set. The custard should be firm in the center, but still loose enough to shimmy as one, if nudged. If the heat continues to intensify, the protein grid tightens, becoming so dense it squeezes out trapped water, causing the custard to weep fluid. Undercooked custard will never set, remaining soupy. Simple custards, like crème anglaise, are the most sensitive to heat, requiring a water bath or a double boiler, while starch-thickened custards, such as pastry cream, can tolerate direct heat.



A Hierarchy of Custard

Pure Custard - Thickened and set by eggs alone, simple custards are the most delicate.

Crème anglaise

Ice cream base (e.g. frozen crème anglaise)

Pot de crème

Crème brûlée

Crème caramel

Flan

Liquid to set bread pudding

Starch-thickened Custard - Sturdier than pure custard, these contain flour or cornstarch, enabling them to withstand greater heat.

Pastry cream

Pudding

Liquid to set clafoutis

Gelatin-thickened Custard - No eggs here! Gelatin provides the structural boost for this variety of custard.

Panna cotta

Mousse

Bavarians



Curds

There's one major ingredient that separates a curd from custard—fruit juice. The interplay of sugar, egg yolks and a low pH juice (usually citrus) results in a thicker, more gel-like substance that maintains its texture even if spread with a knife. The cooking process is similar. As the curd base heats up, the yolk's protein molecules unwind, stretch out, and bond with each other. Unlike temperamental custard, the chemical reaction gets underway much faster, and more smoothly, in curds. The acid from the fruit juice stabilizes the denaturing process, causing early protein bonding while at the same time preventing an overly dense network of molecules. It's difficult to overcook a curd, for the acid ensures a tender, yet sturdy texture.

Curds have a higher proportion of egg yolks than custards, resulting in a distinctly creamy texture. The greater number of yolks increases the protein content, among which are lipoproteins. In a lipoprotein, one end of the compound bonds to an emulsifying fat molecule, while the other bonds to both water and fat molecules. Curds are rich with this type of fatty protein, resulting in a velvety mouthfeel.

One word of caution regarding curds: while it's difficult to overcook them, they can develop an unpleasantly gritty texture once cooled. To avoid this, take care not to whisk the curd over a high temperature for a long period of time. Doing so causes the water that is naturally present to evaporate. Without a sufficient amount of water, the sugar cannot remain dissolved, and instead will recrystallize upon cooling.

Fun with Flavors

Understanding how egg yolks react to heat and other ingredients is half the battle. The key to creating swoon-worthy custards and curds is your undivided attention. Custard will gently bubble up to tell you that it has fully cooked. The sheen of a curd will slowly change as it thickens and gels. The change can occur at a moment's notice. Keep careful watch and you will not fail.

Once you've mastered the preparation, go ahead and have fun with flavors! While the process of cooking custard or curd is always the same, what you add to it doesn't have to be. When making pastry cream, infuse the milk with lavender or cinnamon. Try swapping out lemon for lime in your next curd—or how about passion fruit? With just one simple recipe, you can create as many variations as your imagination will dream up. **ACD**



Junita Bognanni is a freelance writer and food stylist based in Saint Paul, Minnesota. You can find more of her writing about food and travel at www.cannolipepperoni.com.

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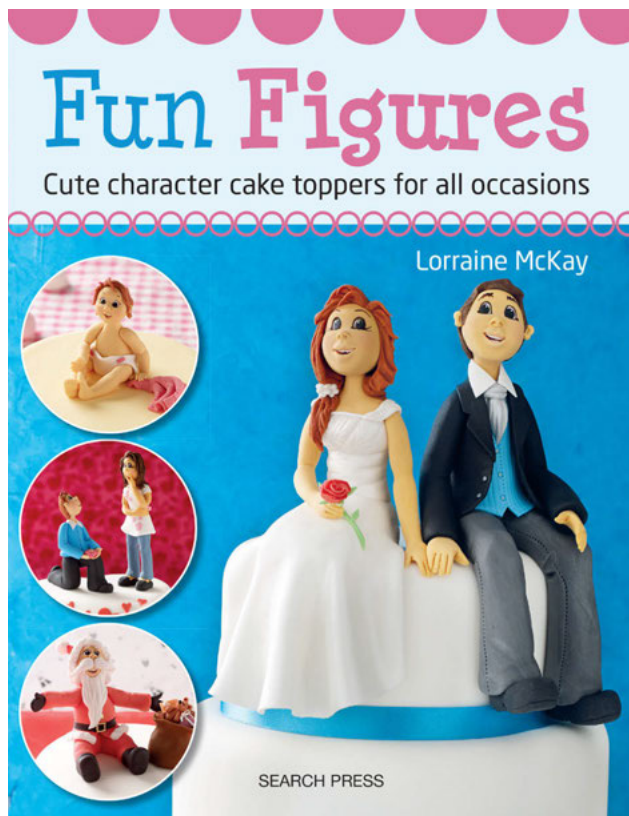
Model BEHAVIOR

BY KRISTINA BOROFF

Excited to improve her skills with modeling, **Kristina Boroff** jumped at the chance to review the new book *Fun Figures: Cute Character Cake Toppers for All Occasions* by Lorraine McKay. “It’s filled with ideas for babies, teens, and all types of holidays. My thought was that I could work through the book to improve my core modeling skills to then be more confident when creating my own figures.”

Lorraine McKay is a self-taught cake artist based in South Lanarkshire, Scotland, who discovered her talent for making “cute cartoon figures with heaps of character” in 2003. She eventually began entering her designs in competitions at Cake International, the famous Birmingham cake show, winning several top awards and is now an accredited demonstrator for the British Sugarcraft Guild. In the introduction to her new book she writes: “The time seems right to get my work in print and be proud of all that I have achieved. I have had an incredible journey thus far.... I hope this book inspires you to reach your goals and discover skills you never thought you had. Creativity is in all of us in some shape or form. Enjoy it!” That was the perfect message for me to get started.

Fun Figures starts off with an overview of the materials and tools needed, describing the difference between fondant and gumpaste, providing recipes for modeling paste and sugar glue, etc. It’s good information for absolute beginners and I noted a couple of key items I didn’t have on hand that would prove to be very helpful. For example, the author mentions a small polystyrene Styrofoam® mold used for holding heads in place while you work on the details, along with tiny ball tool, neither of which I was able to find at my local supply stores. I managed without either, but having done so, it’s clear how useful these would be!



Used with permission from *Fun Figures: Cute Character Cake Toppers for All Occasions* by Lorraine McKay. ISBN: 9781782210320
Photography and design © Search Press Ltd. 2015.

I decided to start with the book’s very first project, a single head. The step-by-step process is well documented—38 photos with descriptions for just this head—so you can compare your ongoing results. But what I realized shortly after starting this project was that with no size or scale provided for this head, I was working too small. The introductory paragraph states: “The amount of paste



Fun Figures opens with a helpful overview of what one will need to complete the projects in the book. Other early pages detail her approach to creating unique expressions, nicely modeled hands and other key techniques.



you'll need to make a head will depend on the size of the model. You will make the body first and then the head will be proportioned to suit." But given that this is the first project and I didn't have a body, my approximately 1" diameter head was too small to achieve the level of detail she goes on to show. So I started over at approximately 2-1/2" with much better results.

When contacted about this, the author explained her approach. "The point of the practice is to reach a point of satisfaction that the details you require are sufficient for the project you intend to lead into. I personally think it is more important to gauge your work with your eye and not be too reliant on scales."

I liked how the book explained and showed how to make the elements of the face. She shares wonderful little tricks on how to make the mouth and give it finished details. For those who have never made any faces before, the instructions don't really include details for proper placement of everything on the face, so this might cause a problem for first-timers.

The next project I went on to try was titled "First Birthday" in which is a boy seated on the cake smiling. You need to have a foam cake to set it on to give you an idea of how big to create this, as well as a place to let it dry.



"These photos show my version of the 'First Birthday' project," said Boroff. "I took the opportunity to add some of my own touches and, after the false start with the head, am pleased with the results." Most of the projects in the book require a similar skill level to "First Birthday", although some are more advanced, primarily due to the costuming.

The first step was making the legs and upper body for the boy on this project. I found that since you use a great deal of fondant for this, they need to dry before you go any further. I had problems with the upper body keeping its shape for me, the fondant slumped after I set it up. I used Satin Ice fondant with some tylose added, but getting that rich red requires a lot of coloring, which softened the fondant—the humidity may have been a factor as well in how long this piece took to dry. The book instructs the piece should dry overnight, but I found that my version needed a few more hours before I could use it. I had to put the upper body on some forms and let it dry over a day in order for me to use it.

I went on to make the head, hands and feet for this project. The detailed instructions are included earlier in the book on how to make hands, arms and legs, so if this process isn't familiar to you, you may need to flip back and forth sometimes. Given the weight of the arms, you'll need to attach them and then let them dry in place. Once everything was dry, I painted in some details, added a few extras and the result was a cool-looking young man.

I really liked the figures in this book and am continuing to practice developing my skills in creating the individual details that make a character unique. While *Fun Figures* does provide very thorough process information, I wouldn't consider this a beginner's book. I think it would be



difficult for someone with no prior experience to achieve good results unless they had some base knowledge of sculpting people. In particular, while I understand that the author wants to encourage readers to use the instructions as guidelines so that the results can work for individual needs, unless you're experienced at creating figures, I don't think it's easy to adjust each piece of the figures to scale.

When contacted about this, the author replied: "Each person's idea for the size of a sugar model on a cake varies. I leave this up to the creator to decide on size and I do explain that when a body is created, this will determine the size of the head, arms and legs.

"I do not promote my classes or the book as beginner or advanced. I haven't taken a class in my life and I have no degree in art, but I think anyone who want to be up for a challenge and is willing to practice can only get better and better." **ACD**

Weblink : Extraicing.co.uk

Kristina Boroff

began her career by making cakes for family and friends just for fun and eventually began competing. She runs her home-based business, Kristina's Kakes in Davison, MI and also serves as the internet coordinator of the Michigan ICES chapter. In 2014 she received her Associates degree for Pastry & Baking and is now working towards her BA with the goal of teaching cake decorating in the schools.



Weblinks : KristinasKakes.com
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Tricky DETAILS

“Edible sanding sugar and edible lace are two looks that usually cause me to cringe when a client shows a picture and wants ‘something like that,’” said **Melissa Bocanegra**. “I had yet to find an edible sanding sugar that didn’t dissolve and bleed when refrigerated, and many of the edible lace products seemed to require a lot of fussing. So I was undeniably curious when given the opportunity to test Bakery Bling, a colored sanding sugar, as well as Magic Decor, an edible powder for making lace.”



Bakery Bling

I decided to start my experiments with the Bakery Bling products, developed by Little Waisted, a company based in Laguna Hills, CA, and distributed nationally by in2food. Owner Lauren Brooks was working on developing her own line of alcoholic beverages and hit on the idea of producing a line of edible sugars and salts to enhance her presentation. The result is, that in addition to Bakery Bling, the company also offers Glass Glitz and Itsy Glitzy, two lines of edible, colored salts.

Bakery Bling is an FDA-approved flavored sugar enhanced with edible glitter. It can be used to decorate cakes, cupcakes, cookies or the rim of a beverage glass. Bakery Bling is also bake stable, freeze and thaw stable, liquid stable and does not bleed. It has a 24 month shelf life and comes in 10 different color options.

As a cake artist, when I think of a true “edible glitter”, I think of disco dust but Bakery Bling has more of a luster sheen to it, which is still quite beautiful when the light hits it. There is a mixture of small- and medium-round and larger square sugar granules that give a taste and texture reminiscent of eating rock candy and not just typical sugar. But looks and taste are only part of the equation—the real test is how it reacts to refrigeration.

As mentioned, I try to stay away from colored sugars, especially red and other intense color, due to the bleeding after refrigeration. I sampled five Bakery Bling—white, lime green, light pink, purple and red—using four cupcakes iced with regular butter-based American buttercream of unsalted butter and powdered sugar. I then sprinkled one color on each cupcake, skipping the white, and placed the cupcakes into a refrigerator over night. The next morning, I took out the cupcakes and allowed them to sit out room temperature for about an hour.

I was amazed with the results! Condensation is always expected when you take any cake iced in buttercream out of the refrigerator. Surprisingly, I observed no color bleeding on the lime green, light pink or purple cupcakes. With the red cupcake, I observed a very small amount of bleeding, noticeable when my nose was about one millimeter from the surface of the cupcake. These results held stable for several hours, even as the cupcakes lost all of their chill from the refrigerator. However, I tried another batch in the freezer and these did show some bleeding.

So, if your product needs to be kept cold, I highly recommend using Bakery Bling and refrigerating—it's a U.S.-made product that looks lovely and taste great, while delivering of its promise of no bleeding.

OPPOSITE: The mixed shapes and sizes of sugar granules in Bakery Bling help with the shimmering effect and provide a pleasant crunch upon eating. **BELOW:** “The results were a wonderful surprise—even after refrigeration and subsequent return to room temperature—the sugars did not dissolve, nor the colors streak or bleed,” said Bocanegra.



Magic Decor

Magic Decor is an edible lace powder made by Pavoni Italia, a company with 30+ years of experience developing products for the baking, pastry and “horeca” (hotel/restaurant/café) markets. It is also distributed in the U.S. by in2Food.

In my experience with edible lace products, I have found that my environment directly affects the outcome of the lace. My kitchen tends to be humid which causes the edible lace to take longer to set up. Also, they typically come with intricate instructions, which can sometimes being a bit intimidating and discourage more frequent use. However, the instructions for Magic Decor were surprising simple—add water, mix and you’re ready to use—no need for environmental readings or complicated mixing times. Could this product really be as easy as it sounds?

The edible powder has a pleasant, almost marshmallow-like scent. I added 100 grams of Magic Decor powder and 80 grams warm water (105-110°F) to my KitchenAid mixing bowl. Using a whisk attachment I mixed on medium speed for only 2 minutes. The result was a creamy, opaque mixture that formed soft peaks when I removed the whisk.

To apply the Magic Decor mixture to a silicone mat, I found that using a small offset spatula worked best to get the mixture in between each and every detail of the design. I then used a plastic bench scraper to carefully remove any excess. By the way, the product works with any silicone lace mats currently on the market, no need to invest in any additional pieces.

Setting the Lace

Magic Decor suggests two different ways to set the lace once it has been spread onto the silicone mat. This is where time is most important. Keeping in mind that I work in a humid kitchen, I tried both of the suggested procedures—one is to allow the mixture to dry on the silicone mat at room temperature for three hours, the alternative is to bake the silicone mat on a sheet pan at a low temperature.

For the baking method the instructions suggests two different oven temperatures and baking times. The fastest drying method is to bake the silicone mat on a sheet pan at 250°F for five to seven minutes in your oven. This should also give you a more elastic lace design once it is done baking. The second baking method is to bake the silicone mat on a sheet pan at 175°F for 12 minutes. I found that while working in my kitchen, I had to extend the baking time by increments of five minutes until the lace was no longer tacky.

However, the recommended method, if you have the time (and low humidity) is to allow the silicone mat to

Tips for Success:

Have everything ready—Be sure to have your oven temperature set, sheet pan ready and spatulas/bench scrapers ready to use.

Get every detail—Be sure to spread the mixture into every detail of the mat

Cover the bowl—While you are waiting for the silicone mat to bake, place plastic wrap over your bowl to keep the mixture from drying out.

Remix—If the mixture has been sitting in between applications, simply take a spatula and remix the Magic Decor mixture gently.

Clean Equipment—Wipe off all spatulas and bench scrapers after applying the mixture to the silicone mat. This will prevent dried pieces mixing in with the freshly applied lace mixture.

Drying times—Will vary depending on your oven and room temperature. If the edible lace is still tacky to the touch, let it bake or dry a little longer.

Let it cool—If you bake the lace, let it cool down before attempting to remove off the silicone mat.

dry at room temperature for at least three hours. I found this method produced the best result. Depending on the conditions of your kitchen, check to make at certain intervals to see if the lace is still tacky or already dry. After two hours, I checked mine every 15-20 minutes and ending up letting the mat dry for a bit more than three hours.

After testing several batches, I found that if you are short on time and the best results are achieved by combining the two drying methods. I recommend baking the silicone mat on a sheet pan at 175°F for about 15-17 minutes. Then, take the silicone mat out of the oven and let it dry at room temperature for about one or two hours, again, depending on conditions in your kitchen. The great thing about this method is that it cuts the drying time significantly while still yielding a flexible design.

Working with the Lace

To remove the design from the silicone mat, the method is the same no matter what drying technique you used. It is imperative that you flip the silicone mat over so that the



Proper preparation, clean equipment and patience are required when working with edible lace in order to get the best results. “I was initially a bit skeptical that such simple instructions could yield quality lace,” said Bocanegra, “but I was very happy with the final product.”



LEFT: "I took the opportunity to experiment with several different drying processes, said Bocanegra, "and found that a combination of oven- and air-drying worked best for me."

design is face down to the counter top. You then want to peel the mat away from the design. It also helped to use a plastic bench scraper to slowly, inch by inch, hold down the lace design to the countertop as you remove the silicone mat. This was the best way to ensure that the design stayed intact.

The final outcome was everything you would want it to be—flexible, intact and easy to handle. You can also make edible lace ahead of time, simply place the results in between parchment paper and then store in either a sealed plastic bag or airtight container. The longer you leave it at room temperature, uncovered, the faster it will dry out and lose its elasticity.

It is best to use the edible lace on fondant. To decorate my fondant-covered cake, I brushed on a very thin layer of piping gel on the reverse side of the lace using a paintbrush. Be sure that your fingers remain clean before you adhere the lace to your cake. The lace is flexible enough to pick up and hold while you figure out the best placement on your cake. If the lace is sticking to your fingers while applying it to your cake, I found that using a little bit of cornstarch on your finger tips will help.

With some little adjustments along the way, I found Magic Decor very easy to use. It can also be colored with edible gel or powdered colorants, just be sure to monitor drying times whether you bake or dry at room temperature as these additions, along with your kitchen environment, will affect your results. **ACD**

Weblinks In2food.com
LittleWaisted.com
Facebook.com/LittleWaisted
Pavonitalia.com

Melissa Bocanegra is a pastry chef and cake artist living and working in her hometown of Austin, TX. She graduated from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in 2005 with a certificate in French Baking and Pastry. She started her business 'cake.' in 2011 and has enjoyed making custom wedding and celebration cakes for the Austin area.



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Floralia

BY NICHOLAS LODGE

In this column **Nicholas Lodge** wanted to share his favorites. “I grew up in England, in a region known for growing lavender alongside roses, lemon verbena, rose geraniums and many other flowers and herbs. I love to use these in my cakes and pastries, and have found they pair perfectly with vanilla—the pastry chef’s most versatile flavor.”





OPPOSITE PAGE: Rose Garden Duets, a dessert created by Chef Lodge for the Walt Disney World EPCOT Food and Wine Festival in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It consists of a rose and pink champagne cake, rose and crème fraîche ice cream and a crystalized organic rose petal. **THIS PAGE:** The preliminary plating for Chef Lodge's Lavender Sugar Cookie, also created for the Walt Disney World EPCOT Food and Wine Festival.

Lavender is my all-time favorite floral flavor, followed closely by rose. Lavender comes in many varieties, and the best for culinary and pastry uses are the English angustifolia, munstead, or French lavender from Provence. These types of lavender are popular due to their sweet flavor and small flowers, called buds. When buying dried lavender, be sure to make sure that it is culinary grade lavender, which is grown organically without pesticides. A lot of lavender is sold for sachets and potpourri and is not for use in food or cooking.

I use fresh lavender, when it is in season, to infuse cream for brûlées, ganaches, and ice cream. I also like to add it to strawberry jam, or to make strawberry lavender jam! It also pairs nicely with lemon, so I often add it to my Meyer lemon curd. If fresh lavender isn't available, dried culinary lavender can be substituted with the same results (as long as you remember to halve the amount!).

Lavender infused sugar is perfect for sifting over vanilla lavender shortbread cookies or for rimming cocktail and lemonade glasses, which I fill with my lavender infused vodka martinis! Can you tell how much I love lavender?



Get Nicholas Lodge's recipe for Vanilla Lavender Shortbread cookies online via **ACD+** at AmericanCakeDecorating.com

If fresh or dried lavender isn't practical in your recipe, the flavor is also available in compound form. I use the Amoretti lavender compound when I flavor rolled fondant, buttercream and fillings. Pure lavender extract is available

and is suitable for flavoring cakes, cookies, and buttercream. My preferred lavender extract is the Silver Cloud Estates brand.

A Rose By Any Other Name

Rose flavoring is used in many Middle Eastern and Indian desserts, cookies and drinks. Fresh, organic rose petals can be used to make rose petal jelly and jam, and used as a filling or as a glaze. Petals can be crystalized by brushing them with pasteurized egg whites, sprinkling with superfine sugar, and drying in a food dehydrator. Crystalized rose petals are beautiful as decorations on cupcakes and cakes.

If fresh petals don't suit your purpose, I recommend Nielsen-Massey rose water, Amoretti rose compound or Silver Cloud Estates pure rose extract. The compound and extract are more concentrated than the rose water, but all three can be used in a rose and pink champagne cake, rose buttercream, rose and crème fraîche ice cream or rose marshmallows.



Get Nicholas Lodge's recipe for Rose & Pink Champagne cupcakes online via **ACD+** at AmericanCakeDecorating.com

Tasting Notes

Other Florals - There are so many floral flavorings that can be used in cooking. Orange flower water, like rose water, is very popular in the Middle East. It can be used to flavor marshmallows, whipped cream or glazes. My preferred brand for this is Neilsen-Massey. Other floral flavors that I have used include lemon verbena (for ice cream and panna cotta), jasmine (for infusing cream for pot du crème, panna cotta, and tapioca), rose geranium (for cakes and fillings), elderflower (for ice creams and custards) and French violets (for cakes and crystallizing for decorations). Edible flowers, such as violas and pansies, are usually crystallized and used in pastry and cake as garnishes.

Vanilla - I have been on many cruises and taught numerous classes in the Caribbean, where you can buy a bottle of vanilla for just a few dollars. While it may seem like a great deal, be wary. Many cheap vanilla extracts do not contain real vanilla or may be manufactured in facilities with little to no concern about contamination, sanitation, or hygiene.

Compounds - When using compounds, do not just guess how much to add. You must add compounds at a specific percentage based on the weight of the finished product. For example, if you wanted to make 1kg (1000g) of buttercream, you would add 3-5% of compound (30 to 50g). Using 30g would give you a very subtle flavor, while 50g would produce a much stronger flavor, or adjust to your taste between these two amounts. Many, if not all, manufacturers (including Amoretti and Albert Uster) will provide percentages for their compounds and flavors.

Failure to follow the appropriate scale of ingredients when using compounds can lead to disastrous results! I have eaten cupcakes and cakes where it was clear the compound was not measured appropriately. These desserts have a very chemical and artificial taste that you cannot get out of your mouth and throat—a very unpleasant experience. I recommend investing in a good digital scale, I use an Escali brand scale when measuring out ingredients, especially compounds—it makes life much easier.

Versatile Vanilla

The single most used flavor profile in the cake and pastry world is vanilla, which is grown in several geographical regions throughout the world, including Tahiti, Mexico, and Madagascar. Just like different types of coffee beans, these vanilla beans each have different flavors; pastry chefs often use different types or combinations of vanilla based on what they are creating or personal preferences. The Tahitian beans are very plump with a floral/fruity quality. This variety is susceptible to heat, so this type of vanilla bean is mainly used in cold, semifreddo and frozen dishes such as pastry creams, custards, brûlées, smoothies, and sauces. The Mexican beans have a sweeter, woody, spicy note. This type of vanilla is great when used in chocolate-based desserts or ice cream. The most widely used vanilla is the Madagascar bean. These evoke a creamy sweet flavor and can be used in both savory and sweet dishes, and in both hot and cold preparations.

In cakes, my area of specialty, I use mostly Nielsen-Massey Madagascar vanilla bean paste and its Madagascar pure vanilla extract. The vanilla bean paste is wonderful in buttercream used to fill cakes or cupcakes; I love the look and flavor of vanilla seeds in desserts. Vanilla bean paste can be substituted for vanilla beans by using one tablespoon of vanilla bean paste in place of one vanilla bean.

The product cake designers and pastry chefs need to be mindful of is vanilla extract. There is plenty of imitation vanilla extract available, often made with low-grade alcohol



The vanilla orchid and vanilla beans, created in gumpaste by Chef Lodge for the Nielsen-Massey display at Pastry Live.

that will impart a bad flavor to your finished goods. So I always stress the importance of using quality products and to watch out for inferior vanilla. This is not to say that all imitation vanilla is bad. Many of the commercially available white rolled fondants on the market are flavored using clear imitation vanilla because pure vanilla extract would impart color into the finished fondant. If you plan to make rolled fondant from scratch and to flavor it with pure vanilla—keep in mind the result will be a beautiful cream color.

In pastries, I use vanilla beans for custards and brûlées. Once the beans have been scraped out and used, it is very easy to then dry the pods and add them to a container of sugar. After a few weeks you will have vanilla infused sugar—perfect for topping crème brûlées, custards and other pastries. Vanilla paste and vanilla beans can also be used in savory dishes such as pork or salmon, to infuse vanilla vodka for cocktails, or added to smoothies and fruit salad. This little brown pod is so versatile! And, when paired with the amazing range of floral and herbal flavors available to us, the possibilities are limitless! **ACD**



Nicholas Lodge an acknowledged leader in the world of sugarcraft. The author of numerous books, he teaches and demonstrates all over the world, although his home base is the International Sugar Art Collection (ISAC) school and shop in Atlanta, GA and its sister school in Tokyo, Japan. He can also frequently be found in Chicago, IL, where he is a lead instructor at the French Pastry School's L'Art du Gâteau program. A frequent judge, he is known for his considered, detailed feedback on entries, as his goal is always to assist in the improvement of any work of sugar art. To this end he has also developed more than 400 specialized tools and pieces of equipment for his ISAC product line.



Weblinks

- Nicholaslodge.com
- Nielsenmassey.com
- Amoretti.com
- Silvercloudestates.com
- Escali.com
- Craftsy.com/instructors/nicholas-lodge
- Frenchpastryschool.com/programs/lag



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All Grown Up

EliotsAdultNutButters.com

Michael Kanter developed the initial versions of his savory nut butters in his home kitchen, and within just a few months after finalizing the flavors—Spicy Thai, Garam Masala and Honey Chipotle—the product was already in



Portland, OR shops. The products fit perfectly in the sweet/savory flavor trend.

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A New Hope

HopeFoods.com

One of the most surprising foods at the show had to be the Dark Chocolate Hummus from Hope Foods. Made with cocoa powder, cocoa butter, vanilla, espresso, coconut sugar and yes, garbanzo beans, each serving size contains 1/3 the calories and sugar of the equivalent serving of Nutella. USDA-certified organic, gluten-free, vegan and shipped in the company’s own high pressure processed packaging, which ensures an eight-week shelf life, Dark Chocolate Hummus hits a lot of consumer’s sweet spots.



Get some recipes featuring Dark Chocolate Hummus online at **ACD+** at **AmericanCakeDecorating.com**.

Smokey Sweet

TheSmokedOlive.com

Al Hartman, known for his smoked olive oils, showcased his recently released smoked brown sugars at this year’s show. Available in whisky, chili and regular smoked, this is another new product that bridges the sweet/savory divide, adding an interesting depth of flavor to a wide range of desserts

as well as meat and vegetable dishes.

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PROUD AS A Peacock

The brilliant arrangement of blues and greens that make up the male peacock's feathers have long been a symbol of elegance and beauty.

Anthony Peña shares his techniques for creating this beautiful bird.



COMPONENTS:

1 lb white gumpaste
 One 8" x 8" cake dummy, covered in fondant
 One 6" x 3" cake dummy, covered in fondant
 Royal icing
 Clear piping gel
 Lemon extract or clear alcohol

FOR DESIGN & ASSEMBLY:

Skewers
 16-gauge wire
 30-gauge wire
 Floral tape
 1 egg-shaped Styrofoam™, 3-7/8" x 5-7/8" inch
 Peacock feather mold **Anthony notes:** I use Sunflower Sugar Art's mold KT-001.
 Sunflower Sugar Art petal dusts in gold, khaki, emerald green, peacock blue, grey
 Black edible marker
 Artist brushes, both liner- and fan-shape
 Manicure scissor
 Plastic wrap
 Tissue paper
 Shell modeling tool
 Pointed modeling tool
 Flat modeling tool
 Ball tool
 X-Acto knife
 Veining tool

1. Take two 13"-long pieces of 16-gauge wire and tape them together. Insert the wire into the top part of the egg, making sure it's inserted all the way through so that the tip touches the base of egg. Bend the wire to achieve a natural look of the neck.



Get the Spanish translation of this tutorial via **ACD+** at **AmericanCakeDecorating.com**



2. Secure the egg, which will serve as the body, to the cake. The stacked cake dummies give the height necessary to build out the cascade of feathers for the peacock's tail.

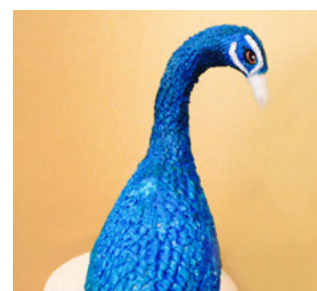


3. Coat the egg with clear piping gel and cover it with white gumpaste. Do the same with the neck and build out the peacock's head, shaping the beak and using the ball tool to make two indentations for eyes. With the manicure scissors add texture to the gumpaste by cutting v-shaped sections all over.

Anthony notes: See step 9 for a close up detail of this texture.

Set aside to dry.

4. Once the body and neck are dry, paint with a mixture of peacock blue dust mixed with extract. When dry, insert a small ball of brown gumpaste in each eye socket, then place a smaller ball of white gumpaste on each of these to give dimension to the eyes. Flatten a small teardrop of white gumpaste over the top and bottom of each eye socket to finish them. Paint the beak with gray petal dust.



5. For small feathers atop the peacock's head, cut five pieces of 1-1/2" long pieces of 30-gauge wire. Make a small teardrop of gumpaste, flatten with your thumbs and insert it in the top of one of the wires. Repeat for the additional wires. With the X-Acto knife make straight cuts into the gumpaste. Paint with a mixture of emerald green and peacock blue dust. Tape the wires together with a small piece of floral tape and secure this into the top of the head while the gumpaste is still soft.



6. For the tail feathers, roll out a piece of gumpaste to 1/8" or thinner. Place in feather mold and press well to get all the details.

Anthony notes: If you have trouble getting the gumpaste to release from the mold, try placing it in the freezer for just a few minutes.

Make several feathers at a time, working on one and keeping the rest covered. Use a flat modeling tool to add detail to each feather.

7. Paint the feather from the inside to the outside edge using a 10/0 liner brush, starting with peacock blue at the center, leaving a v-shaped space in direction of the top of the feather. Follow this with a lighter blue made by adding a drop of white food coloring to the peacock blue, then khaki, then gold. Finally, using a fan brush, frame the edge with emerald green.

Anthony notes: *It helps to have a photo of an actual peacock feather available as reference.*



8. While they are still pliable, start at the bottom and attach the feathers with royal icing. Insert small pieces of tissue paper under the edge of the feathers to provide dimension when drying. Repeat steps 6-8 until the cascade of tail feathers is complete. Set aside to dry.



9. Take a portion, approximately the size of an apple, of white gumpaste and form it into a teardrop shape, then flatten with the palm of your hand. Cut with the manicure scissors to create a feather texture, then go over this with the shell tool to create additional detail. Use the pointed modeling tool to lift each feather. With a black edible marker make spots all over the wings.

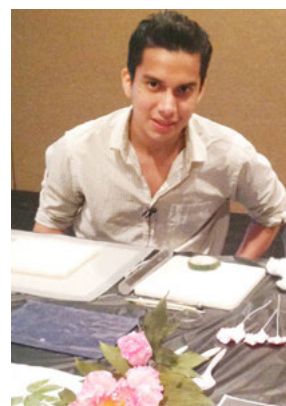


10. Repeat step 9 to make the other wing and attach to the body using royal icing. **ACD**

Anthony Peña, CMSA,

is the youngest person to ever pass the ICES certified master sugar artist test. He has won silver and gold medals at various competitions including Société Culinare Philanthropique, The New York Guild of Chefs, the International Chefs Association and more. His work has been published in this magazine as well

as *Pasticceria Internazionale*, *Australian SugarCraft*, *Modern Wedding Cakes* and the ICES newsletter. A highly regarded sugar arts instructor, he offers private instructions as well as teaching at various cake events throughout the country.



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BUILDING A *Romantic* RABBIT

“I wanted to share a springtime design, so I designed Mr. Rabbit, gathering a pretty and tasty bouquet for his wife,” said **Patricia Moroz**. “Because I’ve already shared how to achieve a similar clothing design in last year’s July/August issue, I thought I’d explain how I build the underlying structure for my figures.”



COMPONENTS:

Three 6" cakes for body of cake.

Patricia notes: Use a dense cake for these so they will hold up to the weight of the fondant and buttercream.

3/4" thick plywood, cut into a 14" diameter circle or larger, and covered in adhesive-backed shelf paper.

Patricia notes: I do not buy these bases through any baking supply companies. Instead, I have a local furniture "fix it" shop that cuts these round boards to any size I request at a very reasonable price. And using shelf paper ensures that no food will come into contact with the wood.

3/8" diameter threaded rod, cut to 22" long and the matching washers and nuts.

Patricia notes: You don't need to buy the more expensive stainless steel pipe, as it will be covered in tape. Threaded rod comes in many different sizes and if you are going to be making figures 3' or taller, you will most likely want to use a thicker threaded rod. I recently created a 3' figure and used the 3/8 inch rod. It was easily strong enough to hold the figure but because of the height, the figure did bounce a bit. The next time I make one, I'll use a thicker thread.

3/8" tap tool.

Patricia notes: The tap will thread the hole in the wooden cake board so that you will be able to screw in a piece of threaded rod.

Wood dowels

6" diameter cake base.

Patricia notes: This needs to be sturdy, so either use plywood covered with shelf paper or plexiglass or another type of plastic.

1/4" diameter armature wire

Pliers

Painters tape

Buttercream icing.

Patricia notes: I like Mike McCarey's recipe because it holds firm and is easy to make.

Egg white

1 lb gumpaste

2 lbs modeling chocolate

Piping gel

5 lbs fondant

Paring knives

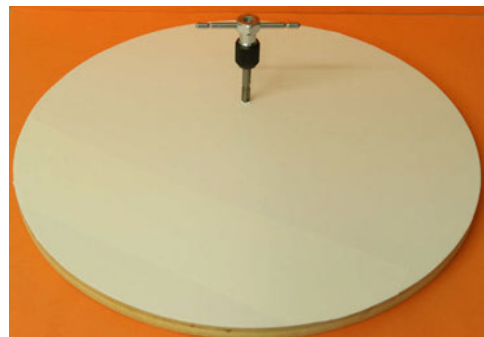
Dresden tool

Small pieces of foam

Foam egg for rabbit head

1. Determine where you want your figure to stand on the board and then you use your tap tool to turn into the wood, giving it the threads that you will need for the support rod.

Patricia notes: The tap tool sits on top of the tap so that you have a handle to turn to get the wood base threaded.



2. Before screwing the threaded rod into the cake base, cover the board with fondant. To ensure the fondant stays in place, spray a little water onto the shelf paper covering the board before applying the fondant.



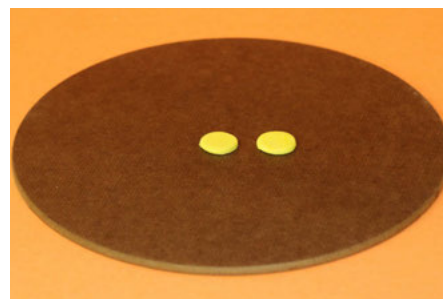
3. Place a dowel through the hole that was drilled into the board from the underside of the cake base. This indicates where the hole is so that you can screw the threaded rod into the top of the board tightly. Then drop a washer onto the threaded rod and place a nut over the washer at the bottom of the board for extra support. It will also help to keep the threaded rod from turning and getting loose at any point.

4. To support the 6" cakes that form the body from the waist to just below the neck, there needs to be a sturdy, hard base. Shown here is a wooden 6" round, with two yellow dots. These dots mark the hole where the holes that need to be drilled for the threaded rod. Both holes should be drilled just a bit larger than the 3/8 inch threaded rod and the second hole should be placed within 1-1/2" of the first. This is to allow for a piece of armature wire to be inserted for the second leg that will not be attached to the base.

Patricia notes: You can use wood covered with shelf paper or use plexiglass. I have always had good luck visiting glass stores that cut and sell windows, etc. They have been willing to cut plexiglass rounds for me at a reasonable price. I normally order several at one time as they can be used over and over again and can be washed in the dishwasher.



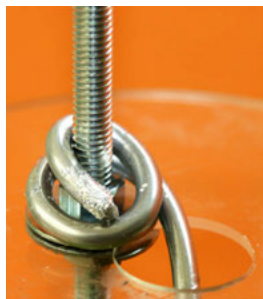
Learn how Patricia finished the base for this design via the digital edition.



5. On the threaded rod, mark where you want the waist of your figure to be. This is where you'll install the plate. In this figure, the plate sits 10-1/2" up from the base. Place a nut on the threaded rod that will sit underneath the plate to hold it in place. On top of the nut, place a washer and then drop the 6" plate on top of the nut and washer. You will then drop another washer onto the top of the plate and another nut on top of that. This will keep the plate securely in place.

Patricia notes: Keep in mind that the legs are going to be created using modeling chocolate that will come all the way up to the bottom underside of the plate which will also keep it very secure.

6. Cut a piece of 1/4" thick armature wire. It should be as long as the threaded rod from the plate to the base plus 3-4" to have enough extra to wrap around the support rod. Slip the armature wire underneath the plate and through the second hole. Take the three or four inches of extra armature wire and wrap it above the plate and around the threaded rod as tightly as possible. It will be easier to use pliers for this effort. Once you have it as tight as you are able to secure it, bend the armature wire in the position that you would like for the second leg to be in. Be sure to keep the last inch to inch and a half for the foot!



7. In order to keep the armature wire from moving, drop another nut in from the top of the threaded rod and using a wrench, screw it in very tight just above where you looped the armature wire.

8. To construct the legs, cover the threaded rod and the armature wire beneath the plate with painters tape. Patricia notes: I use this because it does not have threads or fibers but some people use medical tape or other types of coverings. For the legs and arms, you will need about 2 lbs. of modeling chocolate, depending on how thick or thin you want the legs.

Patricia notes: You can use either dark or white modeling chocolate. Dark is a little bit slower to work but it also provides a stronger support. I prefer to use white modeling chocolate because it is so much quicker and it provides me with enough support for a figure of this size. I use Lauren Kitchen's white modeling chocolate recipe.



Get this recipe online via **ACD+** at **AmericanCakeDecorating.com**



9.

Warm up the modeling chocolate by kneading it with your hands and start applying it to both legs. You will cover this with fondant later, so be sure to not make the chocolate too thick. As you finish covering the legs, start to cover below the plate, all the way to the very edge. You should not be able to look under the plate and see any of the plate at all. Don't worry about getting the chocolate on smoothly until all has been covered. Once you have covered everything up to the waist, use the warmth from the palms of your hands to start running all over the chocolate until it starts to smooth out to where you want it to be.

10.

If you happen to have a thick spot, use a paring knife to slice down the spot, remove the excess and then smooth out with your hands. Keep in mind that if you have hot hands, keep a cold wash cloth close by so that you can cool your hands when they start getting too warm. Once you have finished shaping the entire underside, let it sit and cool for a bit so that it will be firmer to work with. If you are bending the leg made from armature wire into a position off the board such as our rabbit figure, place a bit of foam underneath it and just leave it for a little extra support.

11. Once the chocolate has cooled, the next step is to cut and decorate the pants before moving on to place the cakes on the base.



Learn Patricia's techniques for these pant pieces via the digital edition.

12. Before placing the cakes on the base, cover the threaded rod and the bottom armature wire with painters tape.

Patricia notes: *I also take a golf ball size of modeling chocolate and place it around the bottom where the armature wire is attached just above the plate. I just make a little mound around it to keep it clean looking.*

The cakes should be very cold but not frozen, just firm enough to sculpt, before inserting holes in each so that they will fit over the armature wire. Use plastic wrap to cover around the bottom of the figure and the base to prevent icing and cake trimming from falling onto it. Placing a thin layer of buttercream between each layer, begin trimming the cakes to the shape that you want. Once you've achieved your finished shape, cover the entire cake in buttercream from the waist to the top.

Patricia notes: *If you want to place one or two dowels in the cake, you can. I don't normally because it is such a small cake, I don't think it needs it.*



13. The cake should look similar to this photo after it has been carved and covered in buttercream. Make sure that after the shoulders have been placed, there is still about 2" of threaded rod exposed to insert the head onto.

14.

To place the arms and shoulders, put a nut onto the 1/4" armature wire and screw it down to just above the cake. Next, drop a washer onto the nut. Cut the armature wire approximately 22"



and loop around the threaded rod just above the nut and washer making the loop as tight as possible. Then place a nut onto the threaded rod and screw on tight above the armature wire. This will help to keep the armature wire from moving around when you are building the arms and shoulders.

Patricia notes: Keep in mind, you can always recover from having too much armature wire but if it is cut too short, it is much more difficult to come up with a resolution!

15.

Warm the modeling chocolate with your hands until it is nice and pliable. Take a piece and wrap it around the



nuts, washer and the armature loop at the shoulders. Try to transition it as smoothly as possible into the top of the cake without crushing the cake. Position the arms as you'd like and then proceed with gently covering the arms, leaving the last inch and a half or so for the hands. Once the arms and shoulders have been covered, work to gently smooth it all out. If you are having a problem smoothing out the chocolate where it meets the actual cake, get it as smooth as possible and then spread some buttercream over just that small section to get that smooth transition.



Get Patricia's instructions for the vest, coat, backpack with baby rabbit, mushrooms, berries, hydrangeas and acorns online via **ACD+** at **AmericanCakeDecorating.com**

16.

Use gumpaste tinted brown for the rabbit's hands and feet. For the feet, take a sausage-shaped piece of gumpaste about 3" long and cut it in half. This ensures the feet are both the same size. Slice one of the sausages about two thirds of the way down the middle, then open up the sliced portion and slide it onto the threaded rod. Attach the two slit pieces in the back of the foot, smoothing it out with your fingers. Once it is all one piece, use a dresden tool to mark fur like lines into it.



17.

For the second foot that is kicking up in the air, take the other piece from step 19 and instead of splitting it, squeeze it onto the end of the armature wire that has been painted with piping gel. Then shape it accordingly.

Patricia notes: Because it will still be soft at this point, you will want to use some foam to support it as soon as you have made your fur lines in it. It's best to leave the support foam in overnight if possible.

18.

For the hands, take a sausage-sized piece of brown gumpaste slight smaller than 3" and cut it in half. For the one hand that is holding a mushroom, paint some piping gel onto the exposed armature wire and the bottom cuff of the sleeve, then press one piece of the gumpaste around the wire in a fist shape. After attaching it, push one little mushroom through the middle of the hand. Repeat this process for the other hand with the bouquet.

Patricia notes: If you have too much armature wire on the arms, you can always take pliers and bend the armature wire hands into loops to hold flowers or any other item. Be careful because if you try to bend the wire after the body has been covered, it can move and cause some cracks in the fondant!



19. The rabbit's head is a foam egg, approximately 4-1/2 - 5", available at most craft stores. Drill a hole partially through the egg in order to fit it onto the threaded rod, making sure to drill at the angle you want the head to sit at.

Patricia notes: I just don't find it worth the effort and time to make something like this from rice treats or cake. I built a little jig to set the head on while I am working on it. It is just a piece of the threaded rod attached to a board. I placed a small piece of wet gumpaste, about the size of a marble in the hole that was drilled into the egg. It will then sit still on the jig while I work on it.

Paint piping gel all over the egg, then cover it in brown fondant. This needs to be thick enough to be able to mark fur lines with a dresden tool without going through to the foam egg.

20.

For the ears, drill two small holes in the head for the dowels.

Patricia notes: I hate to force a dowel into the top of the head afraid that I may mess it up!

Using Wilton brown tinted gumpaste, shape each ear. Then dip the dowels into some egg white and insert the ears onto the dowels. Mark with fur lines and let dry overnight before placing the dowels into the head.



21.

Once the head is completed, place a marble-size of piece of wet gumpaste inside of the hole that was drilled into the head. Then place this on top of the threaded rod so that it sits on top of the shoulders. The gumpaste helps to keep it from moving around once it dries. After the head has been placed, hide the joint between the head and the neck by placing a couple of scarf pieces there. Not only does it disguise the joint, but it also helps to keep the head from moving once it dries. ACD



Patricia Moroz, owner and chef at Starlight Custom Cakes in Rockport, ME, creates sculpted cakes and wedding cakes for clients who come to the coast of Maine from all over the country. She attended her first professional class in Boston with Nicholas Lodge and enjoyed it so much she quickly went to his school in Atlanta for extended classwork; she has continued with her training ever since. She is proud to be in the position to be able to share her skills with students at her own classes in the United States as well as Canada.

Weblink StarlightCustomCakes.com/Sculpted-Cakes.html

ON EAGLE'S *Wings*

We featured this cake by **Marilyn Bawol** in a previous showcase, but now she and her husband Joe have provided the background information on how this design was actually constructed. “For any 3D cake, it is very important to study your model from all angles and to plan carefully.

Sketch out the measurements to make sure that you have the right proportions before you start cutting materials,” said Marilyn. “With any gravity defying design, the underlying structure must support the final creation, otherwise all your hard work will just come crumbling down!”



Photo Credit: Stringer Photography © 2013



See more views and close up details of this cake via the digital edition.

COMPONENTS:

1/2" diameter CPVC pipe (light yellow), cut to 12"

1/2" diameter SCH40 white drinking water PVC pipe, cut to 12"

12-gauge indoor electrical wire (NM-B) cut to 16". This wire should have a black, white and red wire along with the copper ground wire.

1/2" PVC adapter (435-005), one side is threaded and screws onto the steel pipe

1/2" PVC 45° elbow

1/2" PVC T connector

1/2" CPVC T connector

Two 1/2" CPVC 90° elbow connectors

1/2" PVC cross connector

1/2" PVC 90° elbow connector

3/8" copper tubing, cut to 36"

5/8" closed cell backer rod, 30" long

Chicken wire

PVC cement

Silicone sealer

Electrical tape

Wire cutters

Screw driver

Copper tubing cutter

PVC cutter

FOR DESIGN & ASSEMBLY:

Pound cakes: one 14" round, one 12" round, one 10" bowl and four 8" rounds

One 9" x 5" pan of angel food cake for the wings

8 oz white gumpaste for the head and feet

1 lb each of white and brown fondant for marbled rocks

4 oz of black fondant for marbled rocks

1-1/2 lbs of white fondant for the wings and the body

2 t CMC in 1/2 cup water for gel glue

1 recipe for Mexican paste for all the feathers

Ball tool

Fondant roller and cutter

Scissors

Clay modeling tools

Airbrush

Airbrush colors in gold, yellow, sage, tan, and various shades of brown

Sugar blowing equipment

Knife

Spatula

12 wooden dowels, 12" and cut to size as needed

Floral wire

Vodka or lemon extract

Brown gel colors

Ateco impression roller and tools

Ateco mat

Ateco diamond and oval shape cutters

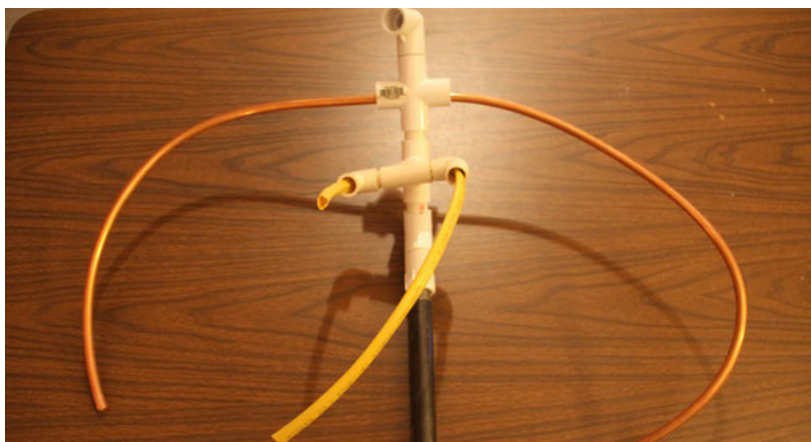
Various size paint brushes

Edible paper printer



1. The wingspan of the eagle is 34" so it is very important that the structure is sturdy enough to stabilize the wings and support the weight. The main support is a 1/2" steel pipe, 8" long, screwed into a steel floor flange mounted to a 3/4" thick plywood base cut to 20" x 24". With the long side (24") facing you, position the flange about 11" from the left side and 6" from the back edge. This leaves enough room for the rock, nest and snake.

2. Screw the PVC adapter onto the steel pipe, then use a 5" section of PVC pipe to connect it to the 45° elbow. Each of the remaining PVC connectors is attached with small pieces (about 1-1/2") of PVC pipe. Use 1" pieces of CPVC pipe to connect 90° elbows to the CPVC T, then cut two 2-1/2" CPVC pieces for the other ends of the CPVC elbows to support the legs. You can also add two 1" pieces of CPVC pipe into the sides of the PVC T to better support the copper tubing then insert the copper tubing.

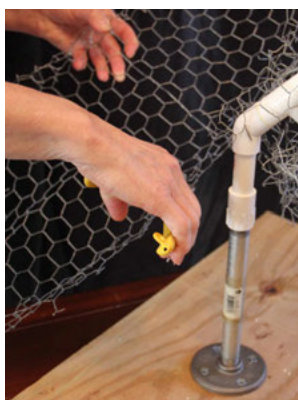


3. Feed the electrical wiring up through one leg, across the CPVC T and down the other leg. It may be easier to take the wire sheath off one end and disassemble the connectors while you work with the wiring then reassemble them once the wire is passed through each component.

4. When you are satisfied with the position and look of everything, you can go back and use PVC cement at each connection to make sure that nothing shifts. To add more stability to the wings, you can squeeze some silicone sealer into the CPVC extensions to anchor the copper wire.

5.

Position the copper tubing into the shape of the wings that you like. Cut a piece of chicken wire 12" wide and the length of the wings and form it around the copper tubing. You are now ready to start working on the eagle itself.



6.

Begin with the head by attaching a piece of gumpaste, approximately the size of a golf ball, to the top 90 degree PVC connector. Roughly carve the shape paying attention to the symmetry and size of the head and incorporating the features of your preferred eagle model. Use the sculpting tools to make the final detailed changes to the head.



7. For the eagle's talons, remove the outer sheath of the electrical wire so that the four individual wires are exposed. Use electrical tape to hold the wires together at the point where they exit the CPVC pipe. To create the feet and claws, separate the wires, shape them into the claws and cut to the appropriate length.





Get Marilyn's recipe for Mexican paste, see step 9, via the digital edition.

8. Then apply gumpaste around each wire, scoring impressions on the underside of the talons.



9. Research showed that the bald eagle has about 7,000 feathers of different lengths and widths, so I wasn't going to make them all! The ends of the feathers on the very top of the wing span have a point while the others have a more rounded edge. There are 12 feathers in the tail section that are bigger and wider than any of the others. Use Mexican paste or gumpaste for all of the feathers. Make two cutouts per feather and position these on each side of a wooden skewer (for the larger feathers) or floral wire (for the smaller feathers).

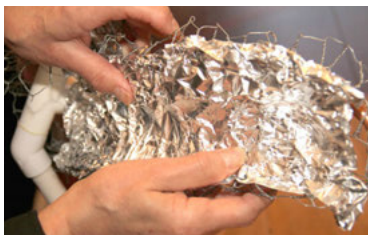


Marilyn notes: *The wooden skewers and wires serve two purposes: They are inserted into the chicken wire to hold the feathers in place and they form the middle spine of the feather.*

Use a feather veiner or cut in lines to resemble the texture of the feathers, then use the ball tool to taper the edges.

10.

Paint the tail feathers white and airbrush the other feathers the color you desire. Typically the body feathers are brown and the wing feathers are a darker brown. Attach the longer feathers along the outer edge of the wing span by twisting the feather wire far into the chicken wire cage for the wings. When finished with the wings, wrap a triple layer of aluminum foil onto the wings and form them to hold the cake.



11. Next attach the large center feathers to the chicken wire behind the feet to disguise the junction of the PVC pipe and the rock.

12. Apply cake to the wings and cover with buttercream then white fondant. Using a round wire tool, make impressions in the fondant to look like overlapping feathers. Cut feather edges by using a 1" oval and score to resemble smaller feathers and apply to the bottom of the wings covering the attachment points for the large outer wings.



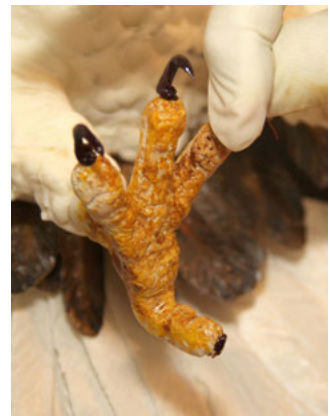
13. Color the eyes and beak.

Marilyn notes: To make the eyes look real, I found pictures of eagle eyes and printed them in the right proportions on an edible printer, then attached them with the edible glue.



But you can also make this by hand. Add feathering around the eyes with the wire tool.

14. Pull sugar for the tongue (pink) and claws (brown) and attach.



15. Shifting focus, cover the base board with foil. Place the cake around the support making it look like a rock formation. Give this a crumb coat and then cover the cake with fondant marbled to look like rocks.



16. On top of the rock, position a 10" round cake that will be the nest.

Marilyn notes: I baked mine in a shallow bowl, then hollowed it out slightly.

Give this a crumb coat of brown buttercream. Create a sugar crumble by mixing royal icing with boiled sugar and sprinkle it in the nest. Airbrush multiple colors (yellow, sage, brown, tan, etc.) to look mossy.

17. Roll brown fondant with protrusions to look like twigs. Add these to the edges of the nest when partially dry. Attach them to the buttercream or to each other using the CMC glue.



18. Create the snake by wrapping fondant around some backer rod. For a diamond back, cut fondant diamond shapes, imbed them into the colored fondant skin and then roll both with an Ateco diamond impression roller sleeve.

Marilyn notes: Again, refer to photos of snakes to incorporate the details you'd like.



19. Apply the fondant around the backer rod and add highlights around each diamond using gel color mixed with vodka or lemon extract. Add eyes and a tongue and arrange on a rock making it look like it's trying to attack the eggs in the nest.

20.

Build some more cake around the back of the rock to disguise the meeting point of the eagle with the rock. Cover that additional cake with the marbled fondant. Airbrush the wings using brown and gold to provide shadows and highlights.



21. Create several eggs by blowing isomalt into balls and lay them into the nest. Flick some brown color from a small paint brush onto the eggs to make them look spotted.

ACD



A natural-born artist, **Marilyn Bawol** thrives on combining her sculpture and painting skills with her baking talents to create an art form that others can enjoy as much as she can. As the owner of Unique Cakes, she focuses on the unusual in wedding cakes, three dimensional sculpted cakes and blown and pulled sugar amenities, sometimes using her husband Joe's technical support when developing support structures for complicated designs. She is always experimenting with different techniques and to her, the more challenging the cake, the more enjoyable it is to create.

Weblink : www.uniquecakes.biz
facebook.com/uniquecakesbymarilyn

A wonderful repertoire of chocolate recipes as well as some basic chocolate techniques, *Chocolate Master Class* is a fantastic addition to any serious baker's library. Try this delicious take on homey banana bread—updated here with milk chocolate and rum-soaked raisins.



Get the recipe online at **ACD+** at
AmericanCakeDecorating.com.

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